United Nations E/ICEF/2002/P/L.20

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
11 March 2002

Original: English

For information

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
Annual session 2002
3-7 June 2002
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Summary of mid-term reviews and major evaluations of country programmes

East Asia and Pacific region

Summary

The present report was prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), which requested the secretariat to submit to the Board a summary of the outcome of mid-term reviews (MTRs) and major country programme evaluations, specifying, inter alia, the results achieved, lessons learned and the need for any adjustments in the country programme. The Board is to comment on the reports and provide guidance to the secretariat, if necessary. The MTRs and evaluations described in the present report were conducted during 2001.

Introduction

1. The present report covers the mid-term review (MTR) of the Philippines, the only country in the region to undertake an MTR in 2001. The report also includes: nine evaluations and studies on issues related to child protection; two reviews of allocation of resources for basic social services in the mid-1990s; one evaluation of training; and one impact assessment of a programme for poor children in China. All were carried out in 2001 except the Chinese study, which became available in 2001.

2. The five largest countries of the region started new country programmes in 2001 and initiated baseline surveys to measure progress. In China, efforts to ensure that different projects were designed for the same counties to establish convergence

* E/ICEF/2002/9.

02-29533 (E) 050402

were only partly successful. Instead, commonality was established among project counties by baseline surveys, all of which contained — to the extent possible — indicators for monitoring progress for children more generally, not simply progress made directly due to the project. In Indonesia, an integrated approach to local-level programming has been established, with considerable effort by UNICEF and central and local governments. A detailed baseline survey is planned for 2002.

Country mid-term reviews

Philippines

3. The fifth country programme of cooperation between the Government of the Philippines and UNICEF aims to strengthen national and local government capacity to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It will contribute to mass mobilization in support of the "Child-Friendly Movement", a Government/UNICEF-sponsored initiative to mobilize support for the government plan for children for 2000-2025. The goal of the plan is a "child-friendly society", where children are nurtured and allowed to grow and develop in dignity, protected from threats to their well-being, and free to express themselves and participate in their own development.

4. Activities are carried out at four levels: family and child; barangay (village); province; and nation-wide. Interventions are carried out in the first two levels in selected project areas, while the third level of activity takes what has been learned in those project areas and disseminates the knowledge to other provinces. Lastly, national-level activities focus on mobilizing support for children and building partnerships in support of the Child-Friendly Movement.

5. The MTR was based on reports of six sectoral task forces (each covering one sectoral area in the master plan of operations), the "cities" task force and 13 regional task forces.

6. **The situation of children and women**. There was a very mixed socio-economic context for children during the first two years of the country programme. The policy environment improved as the concept of human (rather than narrow economic) development was embraced both at home and abroad, and child rights were increasingly integrated in policy development. There were reforms in the design and delivery of social services, and a continued increase of government spending on social services. However, gains have not been as great as originally expected due to some adverse economic and political events. Resource allocation continues to be insufficient to respond to actual needs, creating shortfalls and disparities in access to basic services.

7. These mixed conditions have led to mixed results for children. Although the child mortality rate and immunization coverage have improved, malnutrition has worsened. Improved access to education has been undermined by deficiencies in quality, leading to a rising drop-out rate, especially of boys from primary school. In addition, the number of children in need of special protection has increased. Although the HIV infection rates are not high, preventive messages are being published and cases monitored in an effort to contain the epidemic.

8. **Achievements and constraints**. Interventions aimed at directly affecting the lives of children and supporting families to help their children showed positive

results. Some results were from messages disseminated through mass media or trained health personnel; others were due to the comprehensive "child-friendly schools" initiative, which built a stronger bond among parents, schools and the community. The health aspects of these efforts have been most successful. The child-friendly schools concept is newer and more challenging to the status quo in schools (moving the balance of power and decision-making from education officials to communities and even families) than are health initiatives at health centres (which empower the health workers).

9. Interventions carried out successfully at the community level included building staff capacity at health and nutrition posts (clinics) to support early child growth and at day-care centres to support early childhood development (ECD). Other (non-project) provinces are informed of these successful family and community activities through seminars and training sessions. This replication process will require increased advocacy, relying on building more alliances at provincial and municipal levels. More focused and strategic interventions are needed for children in need of special protection, especially interventions to strengthen the ability of families to protect such children.

10. Partnership-building has been the main focus of nationwide activities and has led to increased resource mobilization and programme impact. ChildInfo (UNICEF data storage and display software) was used at local and national levels to increase availability and facilitate the use of data, information and research on children. These activities have also had some positive results. The participation of children and youth in advocacy of their own rights was promoted and recognized as effective in awareness-building. However, although progress has been made, much remains to be done before child participation in media production is accepted as the norm by media practitioners.

11. **Assessment of programme strategies: lessons learned**. This cycle of the country programme has added to experience in working with local governments, and in particular has allowed comparison of government actions in UNICEF programme areas and areas that do not receive direct assistance. Programme areas have shown distinct improvements in resource mobilization initiatives, partnership- and alliance-building, participation in training activities, and monitoring. The non-project areas have also made important, though less clear, progress. For example, many have developed local plans of action for children through which they can measure the progress made for children.

12. An important lesson for programming is that fund-raising goes beyond finding new sources of money. The ability to develop and package programmes and projects that are eligible for existing funding is also a very effective strategy. This means that resource mobilization often needs to be location-specific as opportunities vary among different places. The country programme plans of action for 2003 are already being adapted to stimulate location-specific resource mobilization strategies rather than centrally-designed ones.

13. Capacity-building should have not only content, but also delivery mechanisms, tailored to local conditions. For example, training can be done through local government learning centres, the Department of Interior and Local Government or academic institutions. Future activities will use this wider menu of training methods and venues.

14. Several monitoring mechanisms exist at the local level, so their linkages in both content and institutional responsibilities need, first of all, definition. Ultimately, local-level monitoring mechanisms need to converge. They should be considered under an overall rubric of child rights monitoring and can be incorporated in the work being done to strengthen monitoring and reporting at the local level.

15. **Country programme management plan**. The MTR did not identify any need for major changes in the programme structure; therefore, there were no major changes in staffing. Future strategy will focus on replication and scaling-up of models as a key way for the Child-Friendly Movement to continue once this programme of cooperation has ended. This replication can only take place if there are closer linkages between programme management and coordinating mechanisms, especially at the subnational level, removing ambiguity of roles and identifying sources of funding. Therefore, efforts will be made to secure those linkages.

16. Outputs and outcomes from the local policy and institutional development programme will be refined to allow monitoring of specific achievements and impact which are otherwise difficult to measure owing to the programme's cross-sectoral nature. This clarification will also help to distinguish between the roles of the local policy and institutional development programme and the communication programme. Both programmes undertake monitoring and advocacy, but their separate contributions need to be identified.

17. It is planned to extend the current country programme by an additional year to harmonize the programme cycle with that of the other members of the United Nations Development Group.

18. The project plans of action for 2002 are taking into account not only the lessons learned from the MTR, but also the UNICEF priorities outlined in the medium-term strategic plan. Integrated ECD, child protection and immunization plus are the three priorities most clearly being covered by the country programme. Work in the area of HIV/AIDS is in the early stages of disseminating messages about prevention; and girls' education is addressed under the overall heading of child-friendly schools.

Major country programme evaluations

Evaluations and studies concerning child protection issues

19. During 2001, 6 of the 14 offices in the region sponsored 10 studies on issues concerning the protection of children, reflecting increased attention to this issue in countries of the region. It also reflects an increasing willingness of Governments to invite UNICEF to work with them to increase understanding of the situation and what can be done about it. Priority concerns in the region are child sexual abuse and trafficking, juvenile justice and children affected by armed conflict. The studies reflect these issues, as well as topics related to child labour, street children and HIV/AIDS.

20. Discussed below are: one study on home-based work (Indonesia and Thailand); two on children in armed conflict (East Timor and the Philippines); one on children separated from their parents (East Timor); one on the effect of AIDS on children

(Thailand); one on commercial sexual exploitation and one on street children, both in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (a first step towards filling the information gap in the country); and one on juvenile justice (Papua New Guinea).

Women and children home-based workers (Indonesia)

21. In conjunction with the Innocenti Research Centre (Florence), three countries in the East Asia and Pacific region (and two in South Asia) carried out studies on home-based work by women and children. Two countries in the East Asia and Pacific region (Indonesia and Thailand) completed their reports.

22. The Indonesia study was initiated to gain a better understanding of home-based workers, who are otherwise "invisible" in national labour statistics. Data collected by the Central Board of Statistics distinguish between workers from the formal and informal sectors, but do not provide a further breakdown of the number of home-based versus non-home-based workers. It was recommended that this information should be available to raise awareness of the plight and situation of these workers. Quantitative data were supported by qualitative data based on case studies and focus group discussions.

23. Findings from the study indicate that two thirds of home-based workers are female. Children also participate in this work, and, in this case too, more girls than boys are involved. However, the results of the study show that severe poverty is not always the reason for turning to home-based work. In fact, some home-based workers choose this type of work as a means of earning extra money to pay for their children's snacks or towards their school-related costs. In some cases, child workers also use this as a way to earn some extra pocket money. Furthermore, the study found that children rarely engage in home-based work in place of their education. Most child home-based workers are 10 years of age or older and continue their schooling at least through primary school.

24. In addition to increasing awareness about home-based workers through gathering more data, more needs to be done to ensure that they are well-informed about their rights and about being more competitive and strategic in the employment choices they make. For instance, many are paid less than the regional minimum wage, but are unaware of their legal rights to demand better pay. Membership in labour unions or associations could be a means for them to protect their rights and interests, but so far this group of workers has not formed such associations. Some workers are producing goods where demand is decreasing and need a better understanding of the market to make necessary changes to improve their competitiveness. Thus, access to training and information in this area would be beneficial. Moreover, there needs to be increased awareness of the occupational hazards associated with some kinds of home-based work and what can be done to protect against them.

Women and children home-based workers (Thailand)

25. The second study on home-based workers was carried out in Thailand. A questionnaire was administered to 305 workers in three different areas of home-based work, as well as to 94 non-home-based workers living in the same neighbourhoods. Qualitative (focus group) interviews were also carried out.

26. The majority (77 per cent) of the workers are female and 79 per cent have finished elementary school. Some 59 per cent of the workers say that the home-based work affects their health. Only 6 of the 305 interviewees are children. They work over 10 hours per day, 6 days per week, so clearly have no time for school. Work supplies and the ultimate market are both uncertain, so people compete for the opportunity for home-based work and, therefore, have no bargaining power or ability to organize for better pay or protection. Women with young children (who can be looked after by other family members) like the work because it provides income while also being compatible with their home-based responsibilities.

27. The study recommends that the following be ensured: the extension of social services to cover people working in the informal sector; incentives for businesses that sub-contract to home-based workers to give fair remuneration and labour protection to home-based workers; the encouragement of workers to organize into groups and to be consulted on policy-making on labour and social services; acknowledgement of the contribution of home-based workers to the national economy; and the establishment of a database (with standard data).

Children involved in armed conflict (East Timor and the Philippines)

28. The Regional Office organized a study of children involved in armed conflict in six countries of the region involving in-depth interviews with child soldiers to improve understanding of the situation and inform policy and planning. The East Timor and Philippines country offices completed their interviews in 2001, and they are reported on below. The studies also provide background information on the conflicts in the respective countries. Guidelines were provided for the interviews, in which children were asked about: (a) their personal backgrounds; (b) the reasons for the conflict; (c) their reasons for joining the given movement or group; (d) the training they received; (e) their assigned duties; (f) their treatment by others in the group; (g) the extent to which their basic needs and health requirements were met; and (h) their mental state. Thus, the studies provided the perspectives of the children themselves on their experiences as child soldiers.

29. The study in East Timor looked at the experiences of children who served on opposing sides of the conflict in their country. In total, 14 children were interviewed. Following the referendum and East Timor's separation from Indonesia, the children, who were part of the pro-independence movement, fared better than those in the "pro-autonomy" (i.e., opposing complete independence, supporting autonomy within Indonesia) militias as they were perceived in a positive light in their communities for the work that they did in the struggle for independence. Furthermore, those interviewed stated that they were treated well by their commanders during the conflict. In the case of those in the pro-autonomy movement, many are facing severe psychological problems as a result of their involvement and of the abuse they suffered at the hands of their superiors. In addition, many are now not accepted by the larger community in East Timor and are often seen as traitors. Their treatment is better in West Timor refugee camps where there are many pro-autonomy supporters. However, children from both groups face poverty and have limited access to education, vocational training and other basic services. This has led some to turn to crime.

30. The report cites some of the recommendations of Jose Alexandre "Xanana" Gusmao, East Timorese independence leader and presidential candidate, to improve

the situation of these children as part of his efforts to consolidate the new nation. These include: increasing the involvement of young people and society in discussions on the problems being faced; more involvement by political leaders on the issue of youth education; a strategic development programme; and the immediate development of vocational training programmes. All measures must take into consideration the special circumstances and experiences of the children and young people in East Timor.

31. In the Philippines, two studies were conducted. One describes the experiences of six child combatants from Mindanao who are or were members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) or Abu Sayyaf, both Islamic insurgency groups, while another reports on child soldiers in the communist group, the New People's Army (NPA), with interviews of three children.

32. Both studies point to abject poverty and limited access to education, health and other basic services as contributing factors to the involvement of children in these groups. In the case of those joining the MILF or Abu Sayyaf, there is also the influence of religious leaders, who persuade children to join as their duty to their religion and as a means of following the will of God. The study on the NPA cites as additional factors the increased militarization of the countryside where the Communist Party of the Philippines has strong support; peer pressure and family influence; and cultural norms that classify children as being mature at a young age.

33. Further exacerbating the problem, the armed forces do not always report the capture of child soldiers, as required by law. Therefore, there is the danger that these children can be used as informants or in other ways that could be to their detriment, making the protection of their security and best interests more difficult. For those children who are under the care of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, more needs to be done to protect their well-being and best interests, with better coordination among all the agencies concerned, including the military, the police and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Separated and orphaned children (East Timor)

34. This assessment was conducted by UNICEF, in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee, in response to concerns voiced by the Task Force on Separated Children and Orphans that children were not receiving the care and attention they required and that they were being placed in child-care facilities and orphanages while still having surviving parents or family members. The aim of the assessment was to provide information to all concerned parties, such as people working with the child-care centres, those in the United Nations Transitional Administration, and future government, staff and administrators of the child-care centres and the community as a whole. It was also meant to assist those developing policies for the rights and protection of children in East Timor.

35. Thirty-seven centres were visited for the survey covering the three types of child-care facilities: full-time child centres; boarding houses; and boarding schools. A total of 1,242 children were surveyed, with 760 providing complete information.

36. The evaluation found that most of the children in the centres are not orphans and have a living parent or parents. Of the 1,242 children who answered the question on parents, 19 per cent have no surviving parents, 46 per cent have one living parent, 30 per cent have both living parents, and in 4 per cent of the cases, the

parents and child are separated. It has been a long-standing practice for parents to send their children to these institutions as a means of receiving education and accessing other resources that they cannot provide. However, these centres lack resources and, therefore, the children are in dire need of food, clothing, health care and other basic services. Furthermore, in most cases, these children are also deprived of their right to family life. Recommendations include: improving the quality of and access to the education system so that parents see this as a viable option rather than resorting to sending their children to the child-care centres; developing guidelines and legislation, and providing training and other support to improve the services offered by centres; providing support to families to enable them to better care for their children; maintaining comprehensive and systematic information on all separated and orphaned children; and raising awareness on child protection issues. The report also points to the need of informing donors of this issue to raise needed funds.

Children affected by AIDS (Thailand)

37. This study, a collaborative effort of the Global Orphan Project, the Ministry of Public Health, World Education Asia and UNICEF, was conducted to shed light on the number of children at risk of being displaced or orphaned as a result of AIDS in Thailand. A three-tier categorization of levels of risk was used: stage one covered children whose mothers are HIV positive, but who are asymptomatic; stage two covered those children whose mothers have AIDS; and stage three consisted of children whose mothers have died of AIDS. Findings indicate that 82 per cent of the 512,152 children estimated to be affected by AIDS in Thailand are in the primary stage, while 11 per cent are in the secondary stage and 7 per cent in the tertiary stage.

38. The study recommends that preventive measures be taken immediately by the Government and communities to assist these children. Mothers of children in the primary and secondary stages need to be helped and encouraged to plan ahead for their children's future care. Another recommendation was for the Government to develop specific policies targeted at helping children affected by AIDS and to take an integrated approach, with collaboration across relevant ministries and partner agencies, to ensure that the range of the children's needs are addressed. Local solutions should also be promoted. Furthermore, resources and policy development are required to assist children who are HIV positive with their medical care and general welfare.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (Lao People's Democratic Republic)

39. There is limited information available regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and this study was conducted by UNICEF and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to gain further knowledge about this issue, looking specifically at the experiences of girl prostitutes. One hundred and thirty-three girls, all under 20 years of age, were interviewed about their backgrounds, reasons for turning to prostitution, work conditions, abuse suffered, and hopes and plans for the future.

40. A major innovative feature of the study was that youth researchers, trained in informal interviewing techniques by experts in the field, carried out the interviews.

41. The results of the study indicate that economic factors (but not absolute poverty) play a significant role in leading girls to become prostitutes. Most of them have some level of education, but few employment opportunities are available to them. Of those that exist, prostitution usually offers the best pay. Furthermore, the study found that of those girls who sent money home to their families, in some cases the money was not required for their family's survival, but rather served to supplement their family's income to allow them to enjoy a higher standard of living. Thus, the growing availability of and demand for consumer goods play an economic role in behaviour. Family problems are another contributing factor, with many of the girls stating that they have run away from home at least once. Another finding was that there is a general lack of awareness among those interviewed regarding HIV/AIDS and how this can affect them. In addition, although law prohibits prostitution, and there are additional laws against the prostitution of minors, they are not strictly enforced.

42. One of the recommendations was for the Government to develop a national-level plan to combat this problem, including raising awareness among the public about relevant laws and the risks (including HIV/AIDS) involved for both clients and prostitutes. The development of vocational training programmes was also suggested to expand employment opportunities for these girls, most of whom indicated that they would leave prostitution if given the chance. In addition, social workers need to be trained to assist victims of child prostitution, a service that does not yet exist, although relevant programmes are being developed.

Street children (Lao People's Democratic Republic)

43. The main objectives of this study, conducted at the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, were to ascertain the approximate number of street children and child beggars in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the reasons why they live and work on the street, and to identify ways of assisting them. For the purposes of this study, street children were identified as either those who considered the street their home or who spent most of their time on the street. A total of 138 children under 18 years of age from five areas were surveyed. In addition, family and community members, social welfare workers and the police were interviewed, supported by focus group discussions and case studies on some of the street children. The interviews were conducted by trained youth researchers.

44. The results showed that 75 per cent of those interviewed were male and that a significant percentage (46 per cent) were quite young — between 6-10 years of age. More than 66 per cent of the children between the ages of 6-17 years of age indicated that they did not plan to attend school, in most cases because they could not afford to, even though primary education was compulsory and free. Many of the children stated that they came from poor families and that economic necessity led them to turn to begging or other street activities such as scavenging and selling merchandise. Forty-four per cent of those interviewed said that they had experienced physical abuse, and others indicated that they suffered from depression and other psychological problems. Drug and alcohol abuse were also an issue among these children.

45. The report recommends a two-year pilot project in nine provinces where children and communities are most vulnerable. The report also calls for social welfare staff at all levels to be trained, and for a social work degree programme to

be introduced at the National University. The number of street children should also be systematically tracked through a national database system, building on the data collected for this study. Furthermore, strategies need to be developed to enable and encourage children to re-enter school. For Vientiane Municipality, the establishment of a Street Children's Centre was suggested, which could help prepare children to go back to school, as well as provide other services, including basic health services, food, shelter and referral to other agencies providing aid. Finally, the report emphasizes the need for coordination among the various agencies involved in helping street children to ensure that their needs are effectively met.

Children in conflict with the law: an assessment of the juvenile justice system (Papua New Guinea)

46. The situation assessment of juvenile justice in Papua New Guinea looked at all aspects (age and criminal responsibility, arrest and police procedures, pre-trial release, diversion, trial, sentencing, community-based corrections, detention and prevention of juvenile crime) and made recommendations based on the findings. Some of the problems arise from a lack of resources, some from a lack of training and some from a lack of awareness. In addition, there is a need for better coordination of different agencies that deal with children in contact with the law to make sure they do not "fall through the cracks" and end up receiving treatment as adults. This also happens because only 3 per cent of the population are registered at birth, so only a rough estimation (based on the amount of body hair) is used to guess a child's age. Another recommendation is to support community-based alternatives to detention, which offer a cost-effective way of dealing with children in contact with the law that will help them reform, rather than repeat. Lastly, there is a need for better data collection and reporting to allow monitoring of the situation to ensure that children are not held in inappropriate settings, nor for inappropriate lengths of time.

Impact assessment report of social development programme for poor areas (China)

47. The social development programme for poor areas (SPPA) was designed in response to lessons learned in a previous programme that there was a need to reach poor children by developing the capacity of their mothers and empowering them through various activities, including micro-credit.

48. Results of the assessment showed that at the end of the programme, wealth and incomes were higher in SPPA households than other comparable households, access to sanitary latrines was much higher than non-SPPA participants and the use of oral rehydration therapy for diarrhoea was much higher in programme households. Mothers in SPPA households knew better when to use iodized salt in cooking, and women's status was higher in their households. Problems in the programme included those associated with targeting (many, but not all households receiving funds were poor, although that was supposed to be a criterion). Most importantly, however, micro-credit and training operations did not seem sustainable either in financial or human capacity terms.

49. Response to this assessment was to remedy the lack of capacity for sustainability by adding another three years to the project counties instead of

stopping the project, as originally planned, in 2000, so there is time to build human and financial sustainability. The project will be phased out at the time of the MTR, assuming sustainability has been attained.

Evaluation of training (Myanmar)

50. UNICEF spends much of its resources on training activities of various forms, but evaluation of training (beyond simple pre-post tests and evaluation forms in training sessions) is rarely done. Training activities in a variety of sectors were included in the evaluation. The evaluation findings were consolidated under three major components: relevance; process; and results. The evaluation assessed and analysed the results of training in changes at the following levels: participants' attitudes, knowledge and/or skills; an individual's performance; change in organizational performance; and change in the situation of stakeholders.

51. The evaluation followed the "utilization-focused" approach, emphasizing the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process, including: the planning and formulation of questions; discussion of findings and results; and drafting of recommendations. A Steering Committee was formed in UNICEF and, recognizing that government counterparts were key stakeholders in the evaluation, there were regular meetings with counterparts throughout the process. In order to answer the evaluation questions, the evaluation facilitator helped to develop a common understanding of how the training objectives linked to the broader objectives of the respective project. This involved interacting with stakeholders to expand their understanding of the overall programme model (planned sequence of changes and assumptions) and subjecting this to an examination based on stakeholders' intuitive concerns or suspicions. The stakeholders contributed to the definition of other factors that influence change at the various levels of results.

52. The evaluation found that training was appropriate and relevant as a strategy, but not sufficient in itself to increase capacity as other influences related to the capacity of service, such as institutional constraints, structural constraints, low wages, motivation, recruitment or vacant posts, must also be addressed in order to have a sustainable impact on capacity. The implementation of training activities was found to be cost-efficient and of high quality. The results of the training were promising immediately afterwards in terms of a change in participants' knowledge, skills and attitudes (first level). However, with limited application and support, this knowledge reduced over time. Training activities did not have a significant effect on changing the performance of the individual (second level), nor in changing the performance of the organization (third level). The evaluators, in consultation with the stakeholders, offered three explanations for the difference between the expected results and the actual results: (a) the objectives of the training components were often overly ambitious; (b) the length of the training was often too short to allow the participants to fully digest and understand the respective subject; and (c) the evaluation found that in order for training to have a significant impact on improving performance, other inputs are also necessary. These results have already been used to adapt the strategies for capacity-building in the 2002 programme.

Assessments of basic social service financing (Thailand) and budget allocation for human development (Philippines)

53. Both of these studies assessed levels of public spending on basic social services in the mid- to late-1990s. Recommendations were made on steps to be taken for further progress.

54. The study in the Philippines covered 1995-1998, and the finding was that, overall, local government units have increased public budget shares for basic social services — described in the report as spending on human priority concerns — from 14.3 to 16.5 per cent. The assessment of the situation in Thailand covered several years within the 10-year period of 1986-1996. Allocation on basic social services comprised 13.6 per cent of the total budget in 1996, which the study indicates would be increased to 14.4 per cent in the 1997 budget.

55. In both cases, the reports emphasized that while budget allocations towards basic social services should be increased, it is essential that efficiency in the use of funds be monitored and necessary improvements made. It was further recommended that budget distribution systems be revised to be more targeted and equitable so that those areas in need, with a lower share of the budget but higher expenditures, were better served. In addition, data collection and information gathering systems should be developed to better track the effectiveness of the programmes and projects in place. Alternative sources of funds also need to be identified, such as locally-generated revenues and cooperation with NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and the private sector. The Philippines report further recommended that a "matching funds" scheme be developed by the central government to encourage local governments to allocate more of their budgets towards basic social services. The Thailand report suggested reviewing and drawing lessons from how other entities such as NGOs, CBOs, international partners and other governments utilized their funds on basic social services.

Conclusion

56. The MTR in the Philippines took a comprehensive look at successes and shortfalls in the country programme of cooperation. It identified successes in more traditional areas of support (basic health service delivery), but understandably slower progress where the status quo is being challenged (child-friendly schools). A next step identified is for more concentrated advocacy and partner mobilization at provincial and central levels to take good local experience and disseminate it more widely, to move towards establishing the Child-Friendly Movement more securely.

57. The studies on issues of child protection (East Timor, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Thailand) are varied in style and focus. Some are in response to regional initiatives, whereas others are completely country-based. A common thread, however, is the way that they are following up on the often-cited problem of lack of data by investigating areas not accessible to simple surveys. The new findings will be used for programme planning, as well as advocacy, in varying degrees. The classification of children made vulnerable by the HIV/AIDS status of their mothers is very programmatic, whereas the study of commercial sexual exploitation is stronger for advocacy.

58. The two budget studies (Thailand and Philippines) encouraging signs that, at least in these two countries, there is some increase in budgetary resources for basic social services, although the studies end before the economic crisis hit the region. A valuable point is also made that allocation of budget is not a sufficient indicator of success as waste of money in mismanaged or misguided programmes can negate any achievements made in budgetary allocation.

59. The two other major evaluations (China and Myanmar) show that a considerable investment of time and money in a major evaluation produces positive, actionable and reliable results. In both countries, lessons learned from the evaluations have been used to adjust future programmes. In the case of China, the adjustments were already changing a programme based on previous evaluation findings and are, therefore, "second generation" lessons learned.